

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SS-20 FEA-02 TRSE-00 EA-11

AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

XMB-07 OPIC-12 SPC-03 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

NSC-10 STR-08 CEA-02 INT-08 SCI-06 AEC-11 AF-10 NEA-10

ARA-16 DRC-01 /217 W

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R 171546Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6136

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, FR

SUBJECT: ENERGY: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

REF: STATE 6596

STATE ALSO FOR T/IEP

1. FRANCE HAS POOR RESOURCE BASE FOR MAJOR-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC ENERGY ALTERNATIVE. FRENCH COAL PRODUCTION HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY HIGH LABOR COSTS AND POVERTY OF REMAINING RESOURCES; IT ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 15 PER CENT OF FRENCH ENERGY CONSUMPTION. WHILE PETROLEUM PRICE INCREASES MAY NOW MAKE ECONOMIC CONTINUED OPERATION OF SOME MINES PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR CLOSURE, WE SEE NO EXPECTATION FOR LARGE-SCALE REVIVAL OF COALERIES HERE. MAJOR HYDROELECTRIC SITES ALREADY DEVELOPED AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUBSTANTIAL ENERGY ADDITIONS FROM THAT SOURCE USING CONVENTIONAL TECHNOLOGY ARE LIMITED. HOWEVER, PRIME MINISTER MESMER WAS RECENTLY QUOTED THAT HE WAS ASKING FOR AN EXAMINATION OF POSSIBLE HYDROELECTRIC SITES THAT HAD FORMERLY NOT BEEN

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CONSIDERED OWING TO THEIR HIGH COSTS OF PRODUCTION. WE

HAVE NO READING ON THIS POSSIBILITY EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT FRENCH OBSERVERS HAVE NOT SHOWN OPTIMISM IN POSSIBILITY OF ADDING SIGNIFICANT HYDROELECTRIC CAPACITY. WHILE FRENCH HAVE SOME HOPES FOR SUCCESS IN DRILLING FOR OIL AND GAS, PARTICULARLY IN OFFSHORE AREAS, THEY ARE NOT EXPECTING MORE THAN MA

GINAL ADDITIONS TO SUPPLY. FRENCH OIL COMPANIES ALSO HOPE TO DEVELOP NON-OPEC OIL OR GAS SOURCES IN NORTH SEA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, AND ELSEWHERE, BUT ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT OIL QUANTITIES THUS DEVELOPED WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL OR APPRECIABLY LESS EXPENSIVE THAN OPEC SOURCES. IN SHORT, FRENCH SEE LITTLE ALTERNATIVE OVER SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM TO CONTINUED MASSIVE RELIANCE ON OPEC OIL SUPPLIERS.

2. OVER LONGER TERM, FRENCH ARE RELYING ON NUCLEAR ENERGY AS THE ONLY PRACTICABLE, THOUGH PARTIAL, ALTERNATIVE TO CONTINUED RELIANCE ON IMPORTED OIL. ORIGINALLY, PLANS CALLED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A CAPACITY OF 3,000 MEGAWATTS ELECTRIC OF NUCLEAR POWER BETWEEN NOW AND 1985. APPARENTLY AS A RESULT OF THE PETROLEUM SITUATION, THE GOF HAS DECIDED TO ACCELERATE THIS SCHEDULE. FRENCH NUCLEAR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS REPORTED TO HAVE CAPABILITY BUILDING SIX NUCLEAR REACTORS PER YEAR AS COMPARED WITH THE PRESENT CONSTRUCTION RATE OF ABOUT THREE PER YEAR. THE DIRECTOR OF STATE-OWNED NATIONAL ELECTRICAL UTILITY RECENTLY SAID THAT WITH CRASH CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM, UTILITY'S CONSUMPTION OF PETROLEUM WOULD BEGIN TO LEVEL OFF IN 1979 AND THEREAFTER THERE WOULD BE A SAVINGS OF 3 TO 4 MILLION TONS OF PETROLEUM PER YEAR. FRENCH HAVE ALSO PUSHED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN URANIUM ENRICHMENT CAPACITY (EURODIF), INTRODUCTION OF THE FAST BREEDER SOME-TIME AFTER 1980 WILL EXPAND THE URANIUM FUEL BASE BY ITS FAR MORE EFFICIENT USAGE OF NATURAL URANIUM.

3. OF THE MORE EXOTIC TECHNOLOGIES, ONLY GEOTHERMAL ENERGY OFFERS ANY CONCEIVABLE RELIEF TO RELIANCE ON IMPORTED PETROLEUM, BARRING OF COURSE, AN UNEXPECTED TECHNOLOGICAL BREAK-THROUGH IN SOLAR OR FUSION PROCESSES. THE PARIS BASIN IS SAID TO BE UNDERLAIN BY A RESERVOIR OF HOT WATER. DESPITE AN APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL USE OF THIS SOURCE TO HEAT 3000 HOMES IN A PARIS SUBURB, FRENCH POLICY MAKERS HAVE NOT REVERSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEIR EARLIER REJECTION OF GEOTHERMAL ENERGY AS A SIGNIFICANT ENERGY SOURCE.  
STONE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 JAN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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